

Qatar at a Glance



Geography and Demographics

Location: Middle East, peninsula bordering the Persian Gulf and Saudi Arabia

Area total: 11,437 sq km (slightly smaller than Connecticut), land: 11,437 sq km, water: 0 sq km.

Climate: Arid; mild, pleasant winters (October – March); very hot humid summers (March - October)

Religions Practiced: Muslim (77.5%), Christian (8.5%), Hindus, Buddhist, and Other (14%)

Ethnicities: Several, including Arab 40%, Indian 18%, Pakistani 18%, Iranian 10%, other 14% (2004 census)

Languages: Arabic (official), English is commonly used as a second language

Time: GMT +3 hours



While the median age is 32, less than a quarter of the population is Qatari.

Population: 1.6 million (July 2008 est.)

U.S. – Qatar Relations

Qatar's GDP growth has averaged 24% in the past four years (2003-07). In 2007, the US became Qatar's top export partner accounting for 14% of Qatar's imports. In 2005, the US and Qatar signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). While the US is a leading oil and gas equipment supplier to Qatar, there are sizeable export opportunities in infrastructure development, medical, ICT, safety and security, education and franchising.

Government

Official Name: State of Qatar

Government: Emirate

Capital: Doha

Independence: September 3, 1971

Party: none

Executive Branch:

Chief of State: Amir HAMAD bin Khalifa Al-Thani
Heir Apparent: Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani
Prime Minister: HAMAD bin Jasim bin Jabir Al-Thani
Deputy Prime Minister: Abdallah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Legislative Branch: Advisory Council

Judicial Branch: Court of Cassation, First Instance and Appeal

Administrative subdivisions: No provinces, 10 municipalities (Ad Dawhah, Al Ghuwayriyah, Al Jumayliyah, Al Khawr, Al Wakrah, Ar Rayyan, Jarayan al Batinah, Madinat ash Shamal, Umm Sa'id, Umm Salal).

U.S. Ambassador: Joseph LeBaron

**Above statistics taken from CIA World Factbook*

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Economy

Qatar is one of the fastest growing economies in the world due to oil exports and its successful investment in the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry. Qatar is the world's largest exporter of LNG and will double its output over the next three years. A WTO member since 1996, the country is also actively promoting diversification and liberalization in education, financial services, transport, health, and tourism. The country has several special economic zones to encourage foreign investments. While the work force is majority expatriate, the government promotes a system of "Qatarization" which requires companies to employ set numbers of Qatari nationals.



* Economic statistics taken from CIA World Factbook and U.S. Department of Commerce

Economic Statistics

Currency: 3.64 QAR = \$1.00 (Oct. 2008)

GDP: \$86.1 billion USD (2008 est.)

GDP per capita: \$80,900 (2008 est.)

GDP real growth rate: 14.2% (2007)

GDP by sector: Oil and Gas (56%), Manufacturing (7.3%), Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services (5.8%), Building and Construction (5.6%), Trade, Restaurants, Hotels (4.5%)

Consumer Price Inflation: 13.8%

Labor Force: 638,000 (2007 est.)

Principal Exports: Liquefied natural gas, oil, petroleum products, fertilizers, steel

Main Destinations of Exports: 1. Japan
2. Singapore 3. India 4. Thailand 5. UAE

Main Imports: Machinery and transport equipment, food, chemicals

Transparency Index: Ranks 28 out of 180 countries (2008)

Best Prospects for US Exporters

A. Products & Services

1. Oil and Gas Machinery and Services
2. Architecture, Construction, Engineering
3. Building Materials
4. Computer Hardware / Software Services
5. Medical Equipment
6. Safety and Security Equipment
7. Education and Training Services
8. Franchising

B. Agricultural Products

1. Poultry
2. Meat and Beef
3. Cheeses and Dairy
4. Rice and Grains
5. Nuts
6. Potatoes
7. Dressing, Condiments, Dips
8. Beverages and Sodas